

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend paragraph number [0017] as follows;

[0017] Referring to the Figures, wherein like numerals indicate like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, a steering column assembly is generally shown at 20 in Figure 1. The assembly 20 includes a mounting bracket 22 with longitudinally-extending, spaced sidewalls 26. The sidewalls 26 have inner surfaces 27 facing one another (see Figure 4). A flange 28 extends laterally from each of the sidewalls 26 for attachment to a vehicle subassembly. Each flange 28 has spaced holes 30 extending therethrough for receiving complementary bolts (not shown) to attach the flange 28 to the vehicle subassembly. ~~[[The]]~~ As shown in Figures 1 and 4, the assembly 20 also includes a release bracket 32 having longitudinally extending spaced parallel connecting walls 34 interposed between the sidewalls 26. At least one, or as disclosed, each connecting wall 34 includes a rearwardly-opening primary notch 36.

Please amend paragraph number [0018] as follows;

[0018] ~~[[The]]~~ As shown in Figures 1 and 3, the assembly 20 also includes a steering column 38 mounted to the release bracket 32. An upper jacket 40 is carried by, or as disclosed, integrally formed with the release bracket 32. The upper jacket 40 extends between forward and rear openings 41 and 42, respectively. The steering column 38 extends through the upper jacket 40, and includes an upper shaft 44 having proximal and distal ends 45 and 46. A control housing 48 is disposed about the upper shaft ~~[[48]]~~ 44 adjacent the proximal end ~~[[50]]~~ 45.

Please amend paragraph number [0019] as follows;

[0019] Referring ~~now to Figure~~ to Figures 1 and 2, the control housing 48 receives complementary control switches and, where required, associated control arms or other devices for actuating or otherwise operating the switches. Such switches may include, but are not limited to those for controlling turn signals, lights, windshield wipers and the transmission of the vehicle. An ignition switch assembly 50, a shift lever clevis 51, and

a tilt lever overmold 52 are carried by the control housing 48. A compression spring 53, a force pin 54 and a force pin compression spring 55 interconnect the tilt lever overmold 52 and the control housing 48. The ignition switch assembly 50 has a bore 56 therethrough, which is aligned with a bore 57 in the housing 48. A screw 58 extends through the bores 56, 57 to connect the assembly 50 to the housing 48. A tilt bumper 59, tilt spring 60 and spring guide 61 are likewise carried by the housing 48. As is shown in Figure 1, a rotary connector 62 is disposed about the upper shaft ~~[[48]]~~ 44 and positioned intermediate the proximal end ~~[[50]]~~ 45 thereof and the control housing ~~[[54]]~~ 48 for being operatively connected to a steering wheel (not shown) after the wheel is mounted on the proximal end ~~[[50]]~~ 45.

Please amend paragraph number [0020] as follows;

[0020] Referring now to Figure 3, the steering column 38 also includes a lower shaft 64 disposed within a tubular shaft 66. A cardan joint cage 68 is received within the distal end 46 of the upper shaft 44. The distal end 46 has holes 70 therethrough. Set screws 72 are disposed within the holes 70 to interconnect the cardan joint cage ~~[[70]]~~ 68 and the distal end ~~[[52]]~~ 46. The lower shaft 64 has an end 74 with a hole 76 therethrough. A connecting pin 78 is disposed within the hole 76 for interconnecting the lower shaft 64 and the cardan joint cage 68.

Please amend paragraph number [0021] as follows;

[0021] The lower shaft 64, tubular shaft 66, upper shaft 44, a lower column jacket 80, and a ball retaining sleeve 82 are coaxially disposed within the upper jacket 40 such that the proximal end ~~[[50]]~~ 45 of the upper shaft 44 extends through the forward opening 41.

Please amend paragraph number [0023] as follows;

[0023] Referring ~~again to Figure~~ to Figures 2 and 3, the control housing 48 is pivotally connected to the upper jacket 40. Specifically, the upper jacket 40 includes spaced pivot

bores 95. Pivot pins 96 are disposed within the bores 95 and engage openings 97 on the control housing 48 to pivotally connect the control housing 48 to the upper jacket 40.

Please amend paragraph number [0024] as follows;

[0024] The upper jacket 40 also includes spaced brackets 98 extending from the forward opening 41. Each bracket 98 has spaced holes 100 therethrough. A steering wheel shoe 102 is interposed between the brackets 98 and includes bores 104, each of which is aligned with one of a pair of the holes 100 on the brackets ~~[[99]]~~ 98. A spring pin 106 is disposed through each of the two groups of aligned holes 100 and bores 104. ~~As is shown in Figure 2, a~~ A steering wheel shoe lock 108 is interconnected by a shoe pin pivot 110 to the shoe 102 and control housing 48. An anti-rotation pin 112 is also disposed within the control housing 48 and cooperates with the steering wheel shoe 102, spring pin 106 and shoe lock 108 to selectively permit rotational movement of the steering wheel (not shown).

Please amend paragraph number [0025] as follows;

[0025] Referring again to Figure 1, a transmission linkage assembly ~~[[114]]~~ is also carried by the release bracket 32. The linkage assembly ~~[[114]]~~ includes a shaft assembly ~~[[116]]~~. The shaft assembly ~~[[116]]~~ is operatively connected to and extends between the shift lever clevis 51, a shift gate 118 and a lower shift lever 120. In addition, a shift cable bracket 122 is connected to the mounting bracket 22.

Please amend paragraph number [0026] as follows;

[0026] The shaft assembly ~~[[116]]~~ includes an upper shift tube ~~[[124]]~~. A U-shaped shift tube clamp ~~[[126]]~~ secures the upper shift tube ~~[[124]]~~ to the release bracket 32. As is also shown in Figure 4, the release bracket 32 includes attachment plates 132 and 134 having bores 136 extending therethrough. Fasteners 140 are received through the clamp ~~[[126]]~~ and the bores 136 to secure the shift tube clamp ~~[[126]]~~ to the plates 132, 134.

Please amend paragraph number [0027] as follows;

[0027] Referring ~~again to Figure~~ to Figures 1 and 3, the mounting bracket 22 also includes a lower bearing adapter 142 for supporting the steering column 38 and transmission linkage assembly [[114]]. The adapter 142 has a rear wall 144 with a recess 146 for receiving the shaft assembly [[116]] therein and a cylindrical housing 148 having an opening 149 therethrough. A shaft bushing wedge 150 is disposed within the recess 146 after the shaft assembly [[116]] is disposed therein. A bore 152 extends through the mounting bracket 22 ~~plate 24~~. A tapping screw 153 is disposed within the aligned bore 152 to connect the adapter 142 to the mounting bracket 22 ~~plate 24~~. A lower bearing sleeve [[154]] 156 interconnects the lower column jacket 80 with the housing 148 about the opening 149.

Please amend paragraph number [0028] as follows;

[0028] The assembly 20 is shown in Figure 4 with the transmission linkage assembly [[114]] and steering column 38 removed. ~~[[The]]~~ Referring to Figures 1, 4, 6-7, and 9-10, the assembly 20 includes shear capsules 170 for interconnecting the release bracket 32 and the mounting bracket 22. Each shear capsule 170 is removably disposed within a selected one of the primary notches 36 and is fixed to the mounting bracket 22. The capsules 170 couple and support the release bracket 32 against separation from the mounting bracket 22 in response to application of an axial shear force below a predetermined threshold value. The capsules 170 are also responsive to an axial shear force above the threshold value to cause the capsules 170 separate from the release bracket 32. This permits longitudinal movement of the release bracket 32 relative to the mounting bracket 22 in the direction of the shear force.

Please amend paragraph number [0032] as follows;

[0032] Referring now to ~~Figure 8~~ Figures 1, 4, 7-8, and 9, the assembly 20 also includes tabs 188 for securing the capsules 170 to the mounting bracket 22. Each tab 188 is disposed on a selected one of the sidewalls 26 adjacent the secondary notch 172 and

extends transversely from the sidewall 26 for abutting engagement with the capsule 170.

Each of secondary notches 172 includes an end edge ~~[[190]]~~ interconnecting the upper and lower edges 182, 184. The tab 188 extends from the end edge ~~[[190]]~~ at a generally perpendicular angle to the sidewall 26.

Please amend paragraph number [0036] as follows;

[0036] ~~[[The]]~~ As best shown in Figure 5, the release bracket 32 also includes at least one, or as disclosed, a pair of housings 204 ~~that engage the respective connecting walls 34~~ for receiving the respective capsules 170 therein. Each housing 204 is formed from a parallel segment 206 positioned in spaced relation from a selected one of the connecting walls 34. Top and bottom wall segments 208, 210 interconnect the parallel segment 206 with the connecting wall 34 to define a chamber 212 within which a selected one of the capsules 170 is received. One of a pair of integral support arms 214 extends from each of the housings 204 for interconnecting the release bracket 32 with the upper jacket 40.

Please amend paragraph number [0037] as follows;

[0037] ~~Referring again to Figure~~ to Figures 1, 4, and 7-10, the mounting bracket 22 includes a plate 215. The plate 215 has at least one, or as is disclosed, two guides 216 extending therefrom. Each guide 216 frictionally engages a selected one of the housings 204 for guiding movement of the housing 204 upon release of the connecting wall 34 from the capsule 170. Although the guides 216 may have any suitable shapes and dimensions, each guide 216 comprises a ridge that extends parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mounting bracket 22.

Please amend paragraph number [0038] as follows;

[0038] ~~[[The]]~~ As shown in Figures 1, 3, and 4, the assembly 20 also includes an energy absorbing mechanism 218 that interconnects the release bracket 32 and the plate 215 ~~[[24]]~~ for absorbing energy upon movement of the release bracket 32 relative to the mounting bracket 22 in response to the crash condition. ~~The manner in which the energy~~

~~absorbing mechanism 218 interconnects the release bracket 32 and plate 24 is best shown in Figures 1, 3 and 4.~~ In particular, the plate 215 ~~[[24]]~~ has openings 220 disposed intermediate the guides 216. The energy absorbing mechanism 218 includes a housing 222, which is disposed within one of the openings 220. A plastically deformable strap 224 having opposed ends 226 extends from the release bracket 32 through the opening 220 and housing 222 to the exterior of the plate 215 ~~[[24]]~~. One end 226 of the strap 224 has a hole 228 therethrough. A connecting member 230 extends from the upper jacket 40 adjacent the rear opening 42 ~~[[44]]~~. The connecting member 230 includes a bore 232 complementary to the hole 228. A screw 234 is disposed within the hole 228 and bore 232 to connect the end 226 of the strap 224 to the connecting member 230.